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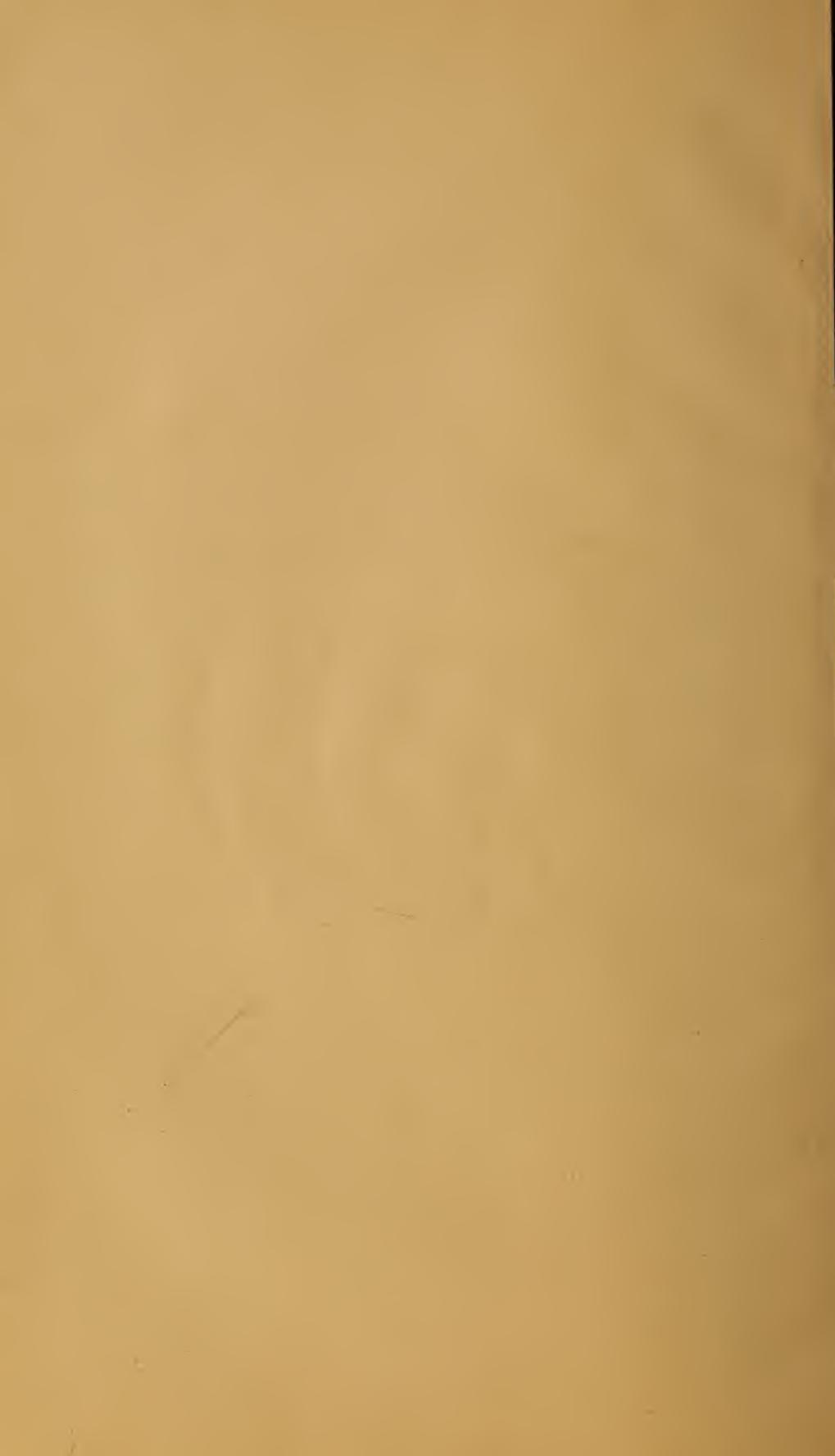


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



AN

OLD PLAY
IN
A NEW GARB;

(Hamlet, Prince of Denmark;)

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

GEO. EDWARD RICE.

"Dulce est desipere in loco."

HORACE.

"Not to speak it profanely."

SHAKSPEARE.

THIRD EDITION.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR, REED, AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LIII.

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STACY AND RICHARDSON, PRINTERS, MILK STREET, BOSTON.
BAKER AND SMITH, ENGRAVERS.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE following *bagatelle*—being a version of the Play of HAMLET—was made by the writer for the purpose of amusing himself, while he was confined to the house, convalescent after an illness; and he submits this as an apology for his levity.

Boston, April, 1852.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE writer of this little *brochure* felt extremely gratified at the very flattering reception it met with, when published anonymously, a short time since,—and desires to record his opinion that its success is mainly attributable to the admirable Illustrations, designed by Mr. L. M. SARGENT, JR.

December, 1852.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.

HAMLET, Son to the former King, and Nephew to the present King.

POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.

HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet.

LAERTES, Son to Polonius.

ROSENCRANTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

OSRIC,

MARCELLUS,

BERNARDO,

FRANCISCO,

HOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and Mother of Hamlet.

OPHELIA, Daughter of Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Sailors, Grave-diggers, and Attendants.

SCENE, Elsinore.

An Old Play in a New Garb.

(HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.)

A C T I.

SCENE I.

Elsinore.—A Platform before the Castle.

FRANCISCO *on his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

Ber. Qui vive?

Fran. Qui vive, yourself! Come, answer me,
Is it my friend, Bernardo?

Ber. It is he.

Fran. You're very punctual, I must allow.

Ber. How passed the time, has there been any row?

Fran. No, nothing stirred, not even a tiny mouse.

Ber. 'T is twelve o'clock, so get you to your house;
And should you meet, perchance, upon your way,
Horatio and Marcellus, please to say
They're in my watch, so bid them hasten here;
'T is very cold, and I feel very queer.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. See! here they come, each one a gallant blade.

[*To Hor. and Mar.*

Here is Bernardo, and he wants your aid.

I'm quite chilled through, so I am going home
To take a drop of old Jamaica rum,
And try to get a quiet little nap.

I trust you'll greet the morn without mishap. [Exit.

Ber. Horatio and Marcellus, how d' ye do?
I'm very glad, my friends, to see you two.

Hor. Has that same spectral thing appeared to-night
That twice before has caused you such a fright?

Ber. I only mounted guard just as you came,—
Had it appeared, you must have seen the same.

Mar. Our friend Horatio says 't is "all my eye,"
He deems it nothing but our fantasy,—
And though I swear that twice the thing we've seen,
He winks his eye, and says he's not so green;
So I, to-night, have brought him here with me,
That if it comes, he for himself may see.

Hor. You doubtless think all this is very funny,
But that no ghost comes, I'll bet all my money.

Ber. Well, just sit down, do n't kick up any riot,
Where's your cigar-case? Now be very quiet.
Marcellus has a light,— let's take a smoke,
And I'll convince you this is not a joke.
Last night of all, when yon same twinkling star
That's westward —

Mar. Hold! Bernardo, do not dare
To speak; here comes the very awful thing.

Enter GHOST.

Ber. In the same figure, like the former king.

Mar. Horatio, you're a dab at declamation,—
Suppose you make it now a short oration.

Hor. Well, truly this beats all I ever heard;
I'm fearful lest I can't get out a word,

But still I'll try. Speak! wondrous apparition;
What is your name, and what is your condition?

Mar. It looks offended.

Ber. See! it's making tracks
As fast as can be; stick to it like wax!

[*Exit Ghost.*

It's gone! Horatio, you look very pale.
Now, sceptic, you'll place credence in our tale:
Is not this something more than fantasy,
Is this all humbug, is it "all my eye?"

Hor. Had I not seen, I would not have believed;
But I'm a man who cannot be deceived.

Re-enter GHOST.

But look! my eyes, it's coming here again;
There's something to be done, that's very plain.
Oh, speak to me, you singular illusion,
I'll understand in spite of my confusion.
If to your royal highness it is known
If Louis Nap. shall have the Bourbon throne,—
If Sir John Franklin yet is safe and sound,—
If the transmuting stone will e'er be found
For which philosophers so long have sought,—
If the sea-serpent ever will be caught,—
If Blank Blank is the saint he would be thought,—
If all is true that Gordon Cumming said,
Or how the spiritual raps are made,—
Or who struck William Patterson, Esquire,
Or if saltpetre will explode in fire,—
And you've come here to tell us, please to state,
There's not the slightest hurry, I can wait.
If you're aware of treasure stowed away,
I'm just the man for it. Dear ghostship, say!

But then perhaps you've come with the intention
Of giving us your views on intervention,

[Cock crows.]

If so, do stop and speak. [Ghost moves away.] Marcellus, stop him!

Mar. Shall I strike at him?

Hor. Yes, sir, hit him! drop him!

[Exit Ghost.]

Ber. Just at the time that devilish rooster crowed,
'T was going to speak; if 't were n't, then I'll be blowed.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing,
As though some hen-roost 't had been pilfering.
But while all these strange things were going on
The morn has broke; and see! here comes the sun;
The show is over, and the wonder's past,—
Suppose we go somewhere and break our fast,
Then call and tell Lord Hamlet all about it,—
With three such witnesses he cannot doubt it.

Mar. 'T is well advised, and I this morning know
Just where to find him; so, suppose we go.

SCENE II.

The same. — A Room of State in the same.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,
Lords and Attendants.*

King. Well, now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
Methinks you're wanting something; is it true?
You can ask nothing that we will not grant,
So, come, speak up, what is it that you want?

Laertes. Sire, I'm wishing to return to France
To improve my French, and learn the last new dance.

King. What says your governor? Most wise Polonius,
What think you of his wish?—Are you harmonious?

Pol. He's worried me till I'm almost demented,
And so, to stop his mouth, I have consented.

King. Then I'm agreeable. Youngster, you can go,
And if you find much fun, just let us know.
But now for Hamlet — melancholy one —
How do you find yourself, my nephew son?

Ham. I'm overcome with bitter grief to find
That all my kin are any thing but kind.

SONG.

Queen. O Hamlet! my dear son,
I'd like to see you jolly,
I think these goings on
Are just the height of folly, —
A stop is put to living,
Sooner, sure, or later,
Then what's the use of grieving
For your respected *pater*?

You wander 'round and 'round,
All wrapped up in sables,
Looking on the ground
And underneath the tables,
As though you did expect to
Behold the old King rise —
A sight I should object to,
And view with sad surprise.

Whatever must be — must, —
That you ought to know,
And you will try, I trust,
To dissipate your woe;

Your governor's departed,
 Why not let him rest?—
 And think, though broken-hearted,
 That all is for the best!

King. Hamlet, my boy, we're yours, sir, to command;
 All we possess is yours, throughout the land.

[*To Queen.*

Madame, come; let us leave this young Hyperion,—
 And if you're nervous, Hamlet, try valerian.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

SONG.

Ham. Oh, would this flesh would melt
 And resolve itself to dew,
 That I as once I felt
 Could feel, and not so blue!
 How weary, stale and flat,
 And most unprofitable
 Seem all things!—What I'm at
 To say I am not able.

Sometimes I've nearly gone
 To perpetrate self-slaughter,
 But then I'm spooney on
 Polonius's daughter;
 And she's a little dove
 I think I'd better wait;
 There's nought like woman's love,
 To keep a fellow straight!

Of what can I be thinking,
 To talk to you in that way!
 You must think I've been drinking,
 To speak in such a flat way;

Now, there's my royal mother,
She had a husband loving,
Who always made a bother
Whene'er he saw her moving,—

For fear lest she might meet
Some hindrance in the way,
Nor let her walk the street
On a damp or rainy day;
With temper always even,
He never answered gruffly,
Nor let the winds of heaven
Visit her too roughly.

This royal husband died,
And left my queenly mother;
Like Niobe she cried,
But next month took another!
Forever and a day
In this way I might rail t' ye,
But all I now will say
Is, woman's name is Frailty.

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. All hail, my lord!

Ham. I'm glad to see you well.

Horatio 'tis —

Hor. My lord, the truth you tell;
And here's Marcellus, you remember him,
'Ycleped of Satan a most precious limb.

Ham. From Wittenberg I think you fellows come;
Say, what's the matter, what is 't brings you home?

Hor. We heard, sir, that the king of this good land
Had faded out, that is, thrown up his hand,
Caved in, become defunct; in short, had died;
So instantly to Elsinore we hied,
That we might in the grave solemnity
Perform a part, and real mourners be.

Ham. Ah, my dear fellow-student, say no more;
It seems you're trying now to run a saw
On me! You scented out the wedding party,
Champagne and Oysters.—Wa'n't it so, my hearty?

Hor. Now, really, my good lord, indeed, forsooth,
You can't suppose so;—but, to tell the truth,
The funeral and wedding were allied.

Ham. The queen, it seems, preferred to be a bride,
Rather than wear a widow's dingy weeds;
She's tried it on, and thinks that it succeeds.
Besides, there was a great deal of baked meat
Left over from the grand funereal treat,—
More than could in the palace for a while
Be rightly used,—she feared lest it might “spile;”
And so, to be at once profuse and saving,
She made a wedding feast;—’t was well worth having,
For those that liked it. Horatio, I must say,
That rather than have seen that curséd day,
In heaven I would have met my dearest foe,
My governor! Methinks I see him now!

Hor. Will you be kind enough to tell me where?

Ham. Lord bless you, my dear fellow, how you
stare!

'T was merely fancy; there is no such thing.

Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Ham. Setting the king aside, he was a man,
Find such another, let me see who can.

Hor. My lord, last night I think I saw your father.
 You seem surprised; I must say I was, rather.
 If you'll attend I'll state the facts to you,—
 These gents will swear that all I say is true.

Ham. Indeed! this certainly seems very queer;
 I pray you, if you love me, let me hear.

SONG.

AIR—*Dearest Mae.*

Hor. Then hearken unto me
 The story I'll relate,
 About the things that happened
 Down by the palace gate.
 Bernardo and Marcellus,
 Each one as brave as Hector,
 While they were keeping guard
 Beheld a fearful spectre.

(*Chorus.*) — Then trust in what I say,
 Then trust in what I say,—
 This ghastly sight
 Appeared at night,
 When the moon had gone away.

A figure like your father,
 And dressed quite cap-à-pié,
 Appeared to these young men,
 And by them thrice walked he;
 They came to me next day,
 And what I tell you, told me,
 So I kept guard that night,
 And found they had not sold me.

(*Chorus.*) — Then trust, &c., &c.

As sure as I stand here,
 I saw your royal dad,
 Just as he used to look,
 But rather pale and sad.
 I know, sir, you will ask
 If I did not address him —
 I did, although I thought
 To answer might distress him.

(*Chorus.*) — Then trust, &c., &c.

Methought that once he raised
 His head, — bleached by exposure, —
 As if to speak — and I
 Expected some disclosure ;
 Just then an ancient rooster
 In the adjoining yard,
 With its discordant crowing
 His royal ghostship scared.

(*Chorus.*) — Then trust, &c., &c.

Ham. This seems quite strange to me ; don't it to
 you ?

Hor. It does, my lord, but what's more, it is true.

Ham. Watch you again to-night ?

Hor. If it is fair.

Ham. Enough said, gentlemen, I will be there.

[*Exeunt HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*
 The governor about ! — There's something wrong,
 And what it is, I'll ascertain, ere long.
 It is not possible foul deeds to smother,
 They're sure to rise up some time or another.]

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*A Room in Polonius's House.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

SONG.

AIR—The Young May Moon.

Laertes. The steamboat bell is ringing, love,
To the breeze the flag they're flinging, love,
And therefore I
Must say good-bye,
Nor tarry longer singing, love ;
By each mail be sure that you write, my dear.
I'm glad that I breakfasted light, my dear,
For every one knows
What terrible throes
Assail a poor sea-going wight, my dear.

To the wharf my trunks they're carting, love ;
The boat will soon be starting, love ;
You'll think of me
When o'er the sea,
And of this affectionate parting, love.
I've yet a few words to say, my dear,
Though perhaps it's too late in the day, my dear,—
I think that of course
Advice will have force
Given just as I'm going away, my dear.

I've noticed Hamlet's attentions, love,—
Perhaps he's honest intentions, love,—
But false or true,
His love for you
May create domestic dissensions, love.

You see he 's a very great lord, my dear,—
 Do n't depend too much on his word, my dear ;
 Men rove like the bees,
 Wherever they please,—
 This fact you doubtless have heard, my dear.

So do n't think I 'm too fearful, love,
 When I ask you to be careful, love ;
 If you 're not shy
 When Hamlet 's by,
 The consequence may be awful, love.
 The public is fond of talking, my dear,—
 And if you 're often seen walking, my dear,
 With this noble prince,
 Significant hints
 About they soon will be hawking, my dear.

Ophelia. Thanks, gentle brother, for each good suggestion,—

That you 're quite right, there can 't be any question ;
 But while abroad, pray keep your mind at rest,
 For I am sure I 'll try to do my best.
 To me the steep and thorny path you show,
 But being good is up-hill work, I know ;
 And when you get to Paris, I much fear
 That you 'll forget what you have just said here.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Still here, Laertes ! This is wrong, my son ;
 The bell has rung, I pray you hasten on ;
 I 've paid your passage, and it would be hard
 If you should be too late to get on board.
 I 'm grieved 't is late, as I had much to say
 In shape of counsel, ere you went away.



LAERTES EMBARKING FOR FRANCE.



I've given you the money that you ought
To spend, but should you happen to get short,
Do n't borrow of your friends, but draw on me —
I trust you'll draw it mild, — but we shall see.
I've nothing more to say about your spending
Or borrowing, but one word as to lending :
I charge you not to do it, for depend
On it, you'll see no more of that same friend !
Dress rich but plain, wear nothing that is fancy,
I hate to see a man look like Miss Nancy.
If in a row they raise a barricade,
Just let them fight it out without your aid ;
This, above all : Do n't let small things distress you.
A pleasant voyage, my son ; good-bye ! God bless you !

Laertes. Well, sir, good-bye ! Ophelia, recollect
What I have said, and on it pray reflect. [Exit.

Pol. They say Lord Hamlet's rather sweet on you,
And you like him, Ophelia, — is this true ?

Ophelia. Yes, father dear, he's offered me his hand,
And says he'll make me princess of this land.

Pol. I've seen a good deal of the world, and know
That these young men most any thing will vow ;
A sad proclivity they've to deceive,
And girls are foolish any to believe, —
Tell him to make you then at once his bride,
And if he hesitates, why, let him slide ! [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

The Platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. 'Tis very cold, and coming on to blow.

Hor. 'Tis very damp ; I think it feels like snow.

Marcellus, have you? — but I need n't ask,
I know you have — I'll take your liquor flask.

Mar. How very lucky that I thought to fill it! —
Here 't is; but pray, be careful not to spill it.

[*They all take something.*

Ham. What is the hour? — is it twelve o'clock?

Mar. It is, my lord; a moment since it struck.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*] What does this mean? — can there be any row?

Ham. The king, I think, to-night doth give a blow.
A drinking set they all are in this land;
They drink and drink, till they can hardly stand.
I'm sorry for it, because other nations
Sneer, and revile us for our deep potations, —
Call us hard names, and —

Enter GHOST.

Hor. Look! it comes, my lord.
Ham. It is the governor, upon my word.
Speak! Hamlet, father, king and royal Dane,
How is it that we see you here again?
Whence comes your royal highness just at present? —
From where 't is very hot or very pleasant?
You died, we buried you with pomp and show, —
What sends you back again? — do let me know.

Mar. It seems, my lord, to beckon you away
Towards the beetling cliff. I pray you, stay.

Ham. But I will follow, — so let go my hand.
Ghost, lead the way, for I'm at your command.

Hor. Let's follow him; this matter's getting serious.
Ham. In Denmark's State there's something that is
curious.

[*Exeunt.*



HORATIO AND MARCELLUS ENDEAVORING TO RESTRAIN HAMLET.



SCENE V.

A more remote part of the Platform.

Enter GHOST and HAMLET.

Ham. This joke, I think, you're carrying too far ;
If you have aught to say, stop where you are.

Ghost. Will you attend to me ?

Ham. Indeed, I will.

Ghost. Well, then, of horrors you shall have your fill ;
I've not much time, and therefore can't be long.

Ham. Suppose you tell your story in a song.

SONG.

Ghost. That I'm your father's ghost,
As you have said, is true,
And I have come to get
A chance to speak to you.
The night is disappearing,
The morn will soon be breaking,
And I shall have to leave,
Before the world is waking.

That I was a good husband
You know as well as I do,
I never served your mother
As Æneas did Queen Dido.
To my treatment and behavior
She could make no objection,
But still I soon found out
That I had n't her affection.

If I went out to walk,
 My unfraternal brother
 Would sneak into the house
 And make love to your mother.
 The world knows that your uncle
 Could not compare with me,
 But who can any reason
 In a woman's fancy see !

While I was in my garden
 Sleeping off a dizziness,
 He poured poison in my ear
 That quickly did my business.
 Of such a wicked crime
 The like was never seen ;
 He took from me at once
 My life, and crown, and queen.

So now you know the worst,
 Act just as you 've a mind ; —
 To let him go unpunished
 I hope you 're not inclined.
 The glow-worm 'gins to pale
 His ineffectual fire,
 And that 's a gentle hint
 'Tis time I should retire.

[Exit.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. What 's the result of this strange *tête-à-tête*?
Ham. Excuse me, gentlemen, but I shall not state ;
 And if with me on good terms you 'd remain,
 Never allude to this affair again ;

My business for the future will be such,
That in your company I can't be much;
But should my actions seem not very sane,
Don't shake your heads and say, "We could explain;"
The times are wrong, and I have learned to-night
That I'm the "coming man" to set them right.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Room in Polonius's House.—Polonius alone.

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Ah, dear Ophelia, what's the matter, now ?
You look as if you'd seen a ghost, I vow.

Oph. Oh, my dear father, I have been so frightened !
More than I was last Tuesday, when it lightened ;
While I was in my private chamber sitting,
Having laid down a purse that I'd been knitting,
And taken up a novel book called "Aims
And Obstacles," by Mr. G. P. James,
(He uses to his name another letter,
I leave it out because it spoils the metre,)
In comes Lord Hamlet without even knocking,
(Such breaches of propriety are shocking !)
Scarcely half dressed, and looking very pale ;
I thought he'd come to tell some piteous tale
Of sorrow and distress, but 't was not so.
He seized me fiercely, and would not let go,
But looked me in the face and shook me hard,
(You may imagine how much I was scared,)
Then shook me, for the very last, once more,
And turned upon his heel, towards the door ;
But how his way he could contrive to see
I can't imagine, for the life of me,
Because his eyes were fixed upon my face ;
(I thought he'd pitch into the fire-place !)

But like somnambulists, he kept on right
In a bee-line, and vanished from my sight.
I've found him hitherto polite and civil,
But then he looked and acted like the _____.
He's been reputed a most temperate lad,
But much I fear his habits now are bad.
I'm sure no sober man could thus have acted.

Pol. For you I think he must have gone distracted ;
Has there been any trouble 'twixt you two ?

Oph. I've done as you directed me to do ;
He did n't speak of marriage and a ring,
And so I acted offish — 't was the thing
That you advised.

Pol. We'll go and seek the king.
I'm sorry for all this, — you see, I thought
That merely to kill time Lord Hamlet sought
Your company. I know men like to flirt, —
'T is very fine for them, but apt to hurt
The girls they trifle with. I do n't know why,
But men of weddin' them are very shy !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, HORATIO, ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants.*

King. [To Ros. and Guild.] Ah, my good friends,
you're welcome here most truly.

You've heard that Hamlet is but very poorly ;
As you're old friends of his, I beg you'll stay,
And try to cheer him up, — pray do n't say nay.
Your visit here I'll promise shall not bore ye ;
We'll make it very gay and pleasant for ye.

Ros. We'll stay, my lord, with pleasure. [to *Guild.*] Am I right?

Guild. Exactly; we'll commence the spree to-night.

Queen. Thanks, gentlemen. [to *Attend.*] Some of you proceed

To where Lord Hamlet is, and say we need His presence here,— his chambers you know well.

Hor. He's dining at the Albion Hotel,* I think just now,— I'm going up that way, So I'll drop in and tell him what you say.

[*Exeunt Hor., Ros., Guild., and Att.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. I'm out of breath with running here so fast, But come to say, I've found it out at last; Your son, Lord Hamlet, is stark, staring mad,— Conclusive evidence of this I've had. I mention this, because I think I ought to,— He's been composing verses to my daughter, And when men rhyme, it's always said to be A most convincing proof of lunacy.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

He comes, and, if your majesties will leave, I will, myself, the noble prince receive.

[*Exeunt KING and QUEEN.*

[*To Hamlet.*] Where goes your lordship?— do n't you know me? Stop!

Ham. Ah! yes. I've eaten oysters at your shop — The real Shrewsbury's — I know you well — I think I'll take a dozen on the shell.

* The name of a celebrated public house in Elsinore.

Pol. You quite mistake, I'm not an oyster vendor.

Ham. I would you had a conscience half as tender !

Pol. Will you allow me, sir, to take a look
Into that deeply interesting book ?

Ham. If you desire it ; but there you 'll see
The most atrocious libel that can be.
It says old men are fools ; that can 't be true,
It seems to me — no doubt it does to you.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. Here come your friends, — I 'll take myself
away, —

Ham. You could n't do much better, I should say.

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

[*To Ros. and Guild.*] What make you, gentlemen, at
Elsinore ?

Ros. To visit you, Lord Hamlet, — nothing more.

Ham. Were you not sent for ? — Guildenstern, what
say you ?

Speak, Rosencrantz ! But no, your looks betray you ;
You were sent for by both the king and queen ;
I guessed as much — you see I am not green !
I 've been 'round some, and do not think you can
Get much ahead of me, — you know your man.

Guild. We do, my lord, and wo n't presume to try.
We were sent for.

Ham. And I will tell you why.

Ros. We 'll hear you give the reasons. Guildenstern,
Attend, for something we have yet to learn.

SONG.

Ham. I have lately, but wherefore I know not,
Lost all power and wish to be merry ;

To the opera and theatre I go not,—
 'T is sad and unfortunate, very.
 In former times I was quite fond of
 Riding, fencing, and all exercises ;
 But such things there seems now an end of,
 And this my acquaintance surprises.

It seems as if every one sought
 To find out some method to tease me ;
 Of suicide often I've thought,
 Since I can find nothing to please me.
 Oh, what an arrangement is man !
 Sometimes he seems quite superhuman ;
 But delight me not one of them can,
 Oh, no ! and not even a woman.

Ros. I'm grieved, because if all is true you say,
 My lord, you can't take pleasure in a play.
 Some actors are now coming.

Ham. Who are they ?

Ros. Some Thespians we passed upon the way.
 You know them well, the players of the city,—
 They have to travel, now.

Ham. That is a pity !

Ros. The Viennese Children have been playing
 there,
 And changed the public taste ; they now do n't care
 For the legitimate, and so no more
 Can these tragedians decent houses draw.

Ham. A thought has struck me : I will write a play,
 And have them learn their parts this very day.
 You say they're coming,— prithee, go and meet them ;
 And if they're very dry, suppose you treat them.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUILD.*

This seems quite fortunate ! I've got my cue
At last, and think I know just what to do.
Into a play I'll make up the ghost's tale,
And if the king, on seeing it turns pale,
'T will prove his guilt, and I'll believe the ghost.
Matters are coming to an end — almost !

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Were you not shrewd enough from him to learn
Why his affairs had taken such a turn ?

Ros. He told us he was not the man he was,
But did n't seem himself to know the cause.

Guild. Nor could it be by us at all detected,—
Our mission to him he at once suspected,
And acted shy. He seems quite overcome,
And does n't find much happiness at home ;
He says he never goes to see a play,
Yet seemed delighted when he heard us say
We passed some actors on their way to court.

King. Think you he'll join in some dramatic sport ?

Pol. He will, my lord ; he's just composed a play
Called "The Slow Coach," — he wrote it all, to-day.
The actors have their parts,— if all goes right,
'T is to be played before the prince, to-night.
He says that if your majesties see fit
To come, he'll give you places in the pit.

King. Tell him myself and wife accept his offer.
There's not a single dollar in our coffer,

And if he had n't thought to be polite,
We could n't of his audience be to-night.
Come, gentlemen, 't is late, let's all retire,
And dress and dine.

Ros. It is well thought of, sire.

[*Exeunt.*

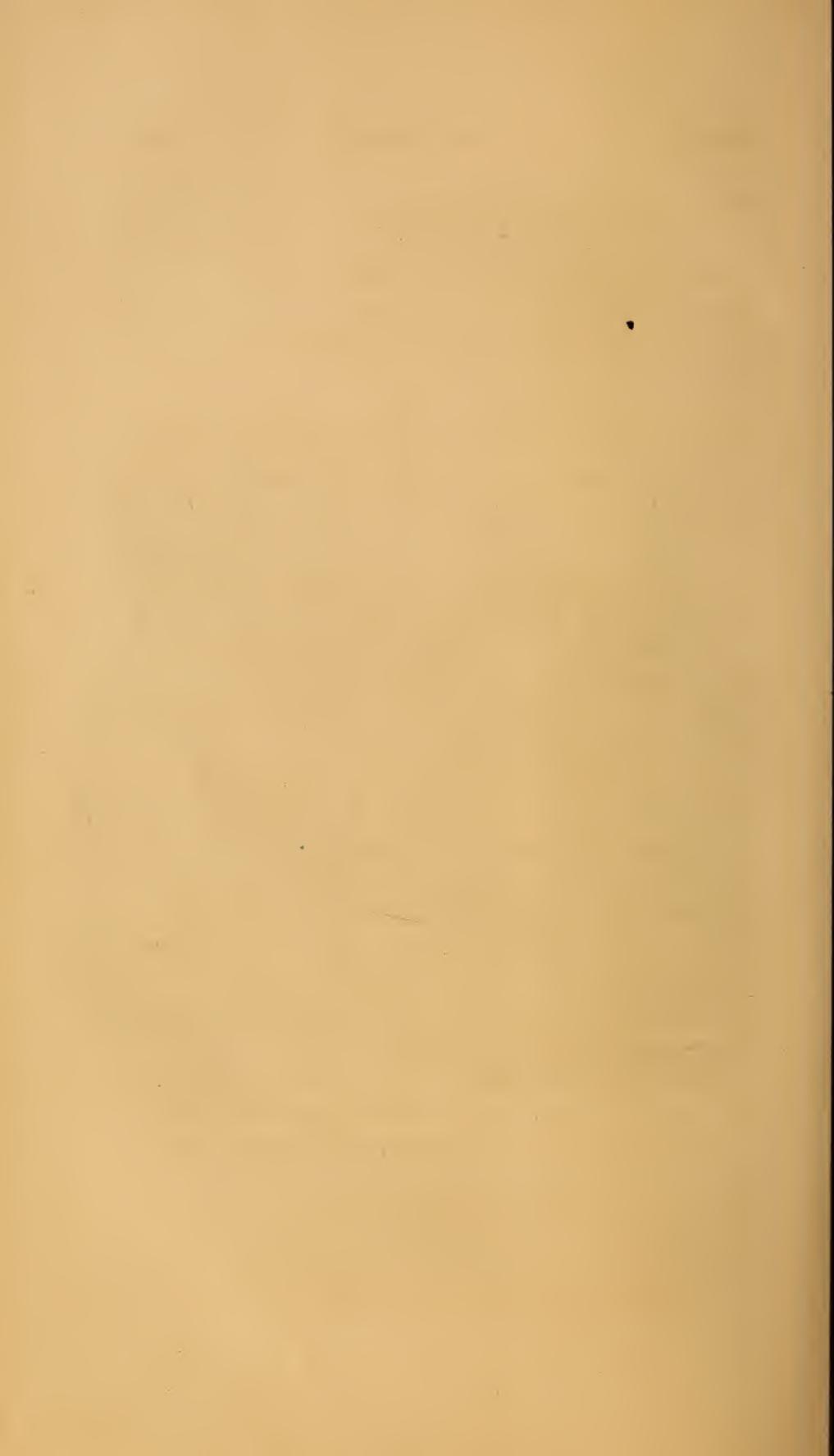
Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be or not to be (that is the question)
Relieved of an attack of indigestion !
The fact is, I am sadly out of tune,
And if some change do n't take place very soon,
I am determined [*takes out a revolver*] something rash
to do,
And rid myself of this existence. [*Looks into muzzle.*]
Whew !
It do n't look pleasant. [*Puts it up.*] I think not, just
yet,—
A little longer I'll contrive to fret.
It is n't manly, though 't is very easy
To shoot yourself, if every thing do n't please ye ;
But when all earthly troubles thus you've ended
And gone elsewhere,— is then the matter mended ?
We can't be certain, and that very doubt
Keeps very many men from putting out
The lamp of life,— for who, think you, would bear
The insolence of duns, the rich man's stare,
The pangs of tooth-ache, and the mail's delay,—
That always happens when one's love's away,
And he's a little anxious,— the distress
Of finding the last shirt quite buttonless,
A stupid servant, or a sulky wife,
And all the other miseries of life.



SAHER-SMITH

HAMLET SOLILOQUIZING.



When such annoyances he might get rid of,
[Takes out the revolver again.
If he'd pull this and blow his stupid head off.
But, as I said before, it is the dread
Of what comes after death that saves his head !

Enter OPHELIA, with copies of the illustrated editions of Byron, Moore, and Rogers, and a casket containing a bracelet.

The fair Ophelia ! Lady, when you pray,
Will you for me a *Pater-noster* say ?

Oph. My lord, I've gifts of yours to re-deliver,
Since there's a change of feeling in the giver.

Ham. Of your strange speech I cannot see the bent ;
No presents to you have I ever sent.

Oph. These fine editions of three charming bards
Were sent to me by you, with your regards ;
See ! there it is, inside of every cover,
In your hand-writing, as became a lover.
This bracelet, too, the best that JONES * could make,
You brought yourself one night, — and for your sake
I've always worn it. Now, I beg you'll take
All back again, — to keep them I've no mind,
Since your behavior's the reverse of kind.

Ham. I think I loved you once — but now I can't, —
My wit's diseased ; enough said, — how's your aunt ?

Oph. 'Tis clear he's crazed. I'm grieved that it
is so, —
For to the asylum he will have to go.

* The name of a celebrated goldsmith and jeweller in Elsinore.

SONG.

AIR — Thou, thou reign'st in this bosom.

Ham. Go, go, in some nunnery hide you,
 There, there, I pray you to stay;
 Fly, fly, I cannot abide you,
 So take your slight figure away.
 So, so, so, so,
 So take your slight figure away.

I, I once used to tell you
 That, that I was deeply in love,
 But, but 't was merely to sell you;
 It was not the fact, Miss, by Jove!
 It, it, it, it,
 It was not the fact, Miss, by Jove!

You, you are a fool to believe
 All, all that the young men may say;
 They, they are prone to deceive,
 And think that a wedding do n't pay;
 And, and, and, and,
 And think that a wedding do n't pay.

But, but if there 's some verdant youth
 Who you to the altar may lead,
 Take, take this as a solemn truth,—
 Let it form a large part of your creed,
 Let, let, let, let,
 Let it form a large part of your creed.

If, if as an iceberg you 're cold,
 And, and twice as pure as Diana,
 Yet, yet slander can 't be controlled,
 You will suffer at last in some manner.

You, you, you, you,
You will suffer at last in some manner.

[*Exit.*

Oph. Well, did you ever! But I'll try and see
If I can't sing a song, as well as he.

SONG.

Ah, me! how sad it is he should be crazy,
He that was always so brilliant and witty;—
That his clear mind should now become clouded and hazy
Appears to me both a great shame and a pity.
The figure that HUNTINGTON * cut for so well,
And said it was always a pleasure to dress,
Must now wear strait jackets, and live in a cell!
When the court hear of this they will feel much
distress.

But then it is I who must suffer the most,
Since he was so intimate with me of yore;
It seems that I reckoned without any host,—
Insanity takes him, and I can no more
Think of being a princess. Somebody must save me
From being a spinster,—I do n't think I'm plain.
I'm now in the market; will any one have me?
I never will think of Lord Hamlet again.

[*Exit.*

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. My dear Horatio, of the many men
I've ever met with, your worth any ten.

* The name of a fashionable tailor much patronized by the nobility of Denmark.

Hor. Ah, my dear lord, it seems to me you flatter.

Ham. You ought to know me better; but no matter.
From you I could gain nothing; but, attend,—
I've always marked you out as my best friend,
For you're a man who always seems the same
In storm and shine, through good and evil fame.
Give me the man that's not a slave to passion,
And I will love him, though he's not the fashion.
Enough! I've written quite a clever thing;
'T will be performed to-night,—you watch the king.
I think I've got in it a little scene
That will astonish him — likewise the queen:
But if it do n't, I only have to say,
The ghost has sold us in a shabby way.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Another Room in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. Horatio, our forebodings were all right.—
The king's behavior at the play to-night
Convinced me. Did you notice, at the scene
Of poisoning, he turned first pale, then green,
And seemed as if he'd faint?

Hor. 'T is a clear case;
His guilt appeared upon his ugly face.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Guild. My lord, I'd like to say one word to you.

Ham. You may say one, and, if you wish it, two.

Guild. The king, my lord, is in a curious way,
And what 't is ails him, really, I can't say.

Ham. He's drunk too much.

Guild. He's taken but a drop.

Ham. Then he ha' n't drunk enough.

Guild. I pray you, stop!

Start not, my lord, from your discourse so wildly,

I've something yet to say.

Ham. Pray, draw it mildly.

Guild. The queen would see you ere you go to bed.

Ham. We will obey,—be tranquil on that head.

Ros. If not impertinent, I'd like to know

What 't is that ails you, why you're acting so?

Ham. [Takes a fiddle from one of the orchestra.]

Can you play on this?

Ros. My lord, not I.

Ham. 'T is very easy; come, I pray you, try.

Ros. I really cannot, and you must excuse me.

Ham. Such modesty as yours must needs amuse me!

On this small instrument you cannot play,

And yet on me your skill you would essay!

'T is very strange!—it seems to me a riddle—

You think I'm played on easier than a fiddle!

Go! hence! depart! and look you, mind your eye,

And tell the queen I'll be there, by and by;

And if you do n't forget them on your way,

I think you'll find them easy words to say.

[*Exeunt HOR., ROS., and GUILD.*

Now will I to my guilty mother straight,

And have a most unpleasant *tête-à-tête.*

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

A Room in the same.

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GULDENSTERN.

King. I've had enough of Hamlet's foolish acts,—
Besides, he's very apt to twit on facts;

So I've determined to prevail on you
 To go to England ; — doubtless he 'll go, too,
 If you invite him. I will get prepared
 Certificates that he is very bad.

When you arrive, as soon as you can find
 Some good asylum, get him there confined,
 And then our royal self will feel more easy.

Ros. and Guild. My lord, we 'll do most any thing
 to please ye ;
 And when our clothes from this week's wash come home,
 We 'll start.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUILD.*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. He 's coming to his mother's room ;
 I think I 'll go and get behind her screen,
 To overhear, — I know I sha' n't be seen.
 And, by and by, before you go to bed,
 I 'll come and tell you everything they 've said.

King. Thanks, my good lord. [*Exit Pol.*
 I do n't know what to do, —

I 'm a consummate knave, that 's very true ;
 But since I 've got my elder brother's crown,
 I do n't feel much inclined to lay it down.
 If I can get his son out of the way,
 Things will go smooth enough, I 'll dare to say.

[*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

Another Room in the same.

QUEEN alone. — To her enter HAMLET.

Ham. You 've sent for me — I 've come. What is
 it, now ?

Queen. Your play has raised a most uncommon row.

The king, it seems, you've marvellously offended.

Ham. Well, Madame, that was just what I intended.

Queen. This language, sir, to me! I'll call out.

Ham. [Seizes her.] Do n't!

Queen. Let go of me!

Ham. Oh, no; indeed I won't.

Pol. [Behind the screen.] Help! ho! Ho! help!

Ham. Why, zounds! it's the cat

[Takes out a bowie knife and sticks it through the screen.]

Playing the spy! Old Tabby,—there! take that.

Pol. I'm riddled, diddled, and completely done for,
And cannot think what this row was begun for.

[Dies.

Ham. [Throws over the screen and sees POLONIUS.]

You've found, old fellow, that it's not the thing

Sometimes to be mistaken for a king.

[To QUEEN, who weeps.

Sit down and listen; if you wish to cry,

You shall have cause sufficient, by and by.

Queen. Oh! my dear son, I really cannot see
What cause you have to be so rude to me.

SONG.

AIR — *The tight little Island.*

Ham. Just let me ask you to look at these two

Fine paintings of great Denmark's kings, ma'am.

It seems clear to me, that you'll readily see

That they're very dissimilar things, ma'am;

Extremely dissimilar things, ma'am;

I repeat it — dissimilar things, ma'am.

And will say that, as yet, I never have met

With two more dissimilar things, ma'am.

There's your husband that was, and your husband
that is,—

My remarks may perhaps be unpleasant,—
But I came here to-night, let it cost what it might,
To compare them — the Past and the Present.
Oh, how can you fancy your Present? —
Your mean and contemptible Present? —
Such a villainous mug, to kiss or to hug,
No one ever possessed but your Present.

Your Past had a face, full of beauty and grace,
And a figure, — but now 't is no matter, —
In a word, he'd compare with that miscreant there
As Hyperion compares with a Satyr.
Oh, how could you think of a Satyr, —
And the very worst kind of a Satyr!
You may get in a rage, but I must say your age
Should have kept you away from this Satyr.

In an elderly dame the blood should be tame,
Nor glow like a burning carbuncle, —
And you can't have the cheek to me now to speak
Of being in love with my uncle, —
My low-lived, intemperate uncle, —
My usurping and murderous uncle! —
You're quite fifty-two, and it's nonsense for you
To talk of a love for my uncle.

And when you knew, mother, he'd poisoned his
brother,
To wed him of what were you thinking?
I should think that you'd rather have lived with my
father,
Than with this wretch, who's so fond of drinking.

A very bad habit is drinking,—
But do n't put a stop to his drinking ;
He'll become quite a sot, and what small brain he's
got
Will soon be destroyed by his drinking.

Oh, would that I might convince you, to-night,
Of the heinousness of your behavior ;
You're my only mother — I can't get another, —
And so from perdition I'd save you, —
If it is n't too late now to save you,
And if you should wish me to save you.
A little more virtue, I think, would n't hurt you,
Though it may not be able to save you.

Queen. That song, dear Hamlet, and the way you've
sung it,
Has touched my heart, and most completely wrung it.
Ham. I trust you'll be improved by what I've said.
[*Looks at his watch.*]
It's now quite late. Good night ! I must to bed.
[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The same.

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Whence these deep sighs from one so wont to smile ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*To Ros. and Guild., who go out.*]

Ah, my good lord, I've heard some things to-night That grieved me much, and put me in a fright.

In short, my son Lord Hamlet's been to see me, And so berated and upbraided,— dear me !

I do n't believe, since time began, another Son ever talked so harshly to his mother ; And worse than all, that elegant and new Screen that I bought, he stuck his knife right through, And killed that unseen, good old man, Polonius.

King. Why, that's a crime indictable, felonious ! Poor Pol. ! I'm sorry, but I must declare I'm very glad 't was not ourself was there !

Enter HAMLET.

Where's the Lord Chamberlain ?

Ham. He with Pluto sups, Where they drink melted lead from red-hot cups ; But, if you doubt it, go yourself and see, — A fitter business for you cannot be.

King. I thank you kindly. Hamlet, you must know
That when this matter's blown there'll be a row;
Two of your friends are going to set sail
For England. Will you go?

Ham. I will not fail
To meet them at the wharf, for, by the Rood,
I think a foreign tour will do me good. [Exit.

King. 'T is well! but till I hear of his arrival,
Of my good spirits there'll be no revival.
I'd like to be made certain on that point,
For while he's here my nose is out of joint.

[*Exeunt KING and QUEEN.*

SCENE II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO and SERVANT.

Hor. What are they that would see me? — can you
guess?

Serv. They're sailors, I should judge, sir, by their
dress.

Hor. Admit them.

Enter SAILORS.

1st Sail. Sir, if Horatio is your name,
Here's a letter for you. [Gives letter.

Hor. I'm the same.

[*Reads.*] "My dear Horatio: When you get this letter,
If it is possible, I beg you'll get a
Way for these fellows to approach the king;
Important private documents they bring.
Scarce had we been a day or so at sea,
Sailing along as pleasant as could be,

*When one morn a long, low, black-looking schooner
Came down upon us like the North wind. Sooner
Than have a fight, we wished and tried to run,—
The pirate sailed two miles to our one;
So, like a cornered rat, we put about,
To do our best and have the shindy out;
And as we closed, I jeopardized my neck,
And made a jump upon the schooner's deck;
And they, presuming all the rest were plucky
As I, just sheered away and cut their lucky;
So I became their prisoner,—but then
I must say they've behaved like gentlemen.
To treat me well they had sufficient cause;
I'm to requite them,—they knew who I was.
But more anon, when you and I shall meet.
These sailors, whom I send, can tell the street
And number of my hiding-place,—pray come;
I've things to tell you that will strike you dumb.
The cigars you gave me were not worth a d—n. Let
Me see you soon.*

Yours, very truly,

HAMLET.”

I thank you for the tidings that you bring;
Come, follow me, I'll lead you to the king.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter KING and ATTENDANT.

King. [Emphatically and dejectedly.] This is a
chequered life! This morn, 'tis said,
The daughter of the chamberlain is dead.



HORATIO READING HAMLET'S LETTER.



Her brother has returned from France, and now
I can but think there 'll be a precious row.

SONG.

AIR — Oh! what a row, what a rumpus, and a rioting!

Oh! what a row, what a rumpus, and a rioting,
All those endure, you may be sure, who act like me!
The thing they call a conscience is quite frequently
disquieting,
And in the night it grips me tight, nor lets me be.
Whene'er I pass the picture of the king, it seems to
frown on me,
And oftentimes I think it is just going to jump down on
me.
I'm willing to resign my crown and go into obscurity,
If such an act will gain for me a feeling of security.

(*Chorus.*) Oh! what a row, &c., &c.

[*A knocking is heard.*

There's some one knocking; sirrah, go and say
We can't see any company to-day.

[*Servant goes to the door and returns.*

Serv. 'Tis Lord Laertes, and he will come in.

King. He's not improved his manners where he's
been.

[*Exit Servant.*

Each thing that happens makes me feel more blue.

Enter LAERTES.

I'll pretend not to know him. Who are you?

DUETT.

AIR — *I'm a jolly French Physician.*

KING and LAERTES.

Laert. I'm a gay young Danish noble,
 Who has just arrived from France,
 Where I've had a very good time,
 And have learned to fence and dance.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, chi long chi la la,
 Chick a chi long, chi long chi la,
 Chick a chi long, chi long chi la la,
 Chick a chi long, chi long chi la.

I've returned to see my father,
 And my sister young and fair ;
 Tell me something now about them,
 Or I shall soon be in your hair.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

King. I have n't got your august father,
 Or your sister fair and young,
 But I can tell you all the facts
 With which of late the town has rung.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

Your governor one night was killed
 In my wife's room, behind the screen,
 Where he had got to overhear
 What Hamlet said unto the queen.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

Laert. Tell me now who did the deed,
His name I'd really like to know,
And after I have ascertained it,
Not long unpunished shall he go.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

King. It was Lord Hamlet who pretended
That he did think it was the cat,
But that he truly thought and hoped
It was ourself, I'll bet a hat.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

You see, I'm standing in his way,
And so on me he would be down;
To him it is a constant grief
To see me wear the royal crown.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

Laert. I little thought when I set sail
From la belle France's pleasant shore,
With both my trunks and carpet-bag,
That such misfortunes were in store.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

King. This morning I learned with regret
Your sister dear was in her bed
Found indisposed to rise and dress,—
Extremely quiet and very dead.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

I think 't was Hamlet's cruel treatment
(You see she thought to be his wife)
That drove her quite to desperation,
And so she went and took her life.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

Laert. These are very awful papers, —

I really do n't know what to do ;
But if I thought you'd been to blame,
I would quickly run you through.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

King. The prince in England now is safe,

And very closely is confined ; —
But should he thence make his escape,
For your revenge a time we'll find.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

Both. I hate him quite as much as you do,

So let us join our hate and forces,
And should he e'er return again,
We'll put a stop to all his courses.

(*Chorus.*) Chick a chi long, &c., &c.

Enter a SERVANT with a letter, which he gives the KING.

King. [Reads.] "Sir, — I, the great Prince Hamlet,
have returned, —

*And some time on the morrow, when I've learned
You've had your breakfast and cigar, I'll call ;
And if you wish to know, will tell you all
The reasons of my sudden re-appearance."*

I thought of him at last I'd got a clearance,
But, like a pewter dollar, he's come back.

What's to be done, think you? I'm on the rack.

Laert. I'll find and challenge him, this very night.

King. That will not do, I can't let you two fight;
'T would raise the Danish nation. An idea
Has struck me hard; attend, and you shall hear:

I think you're something with a bow and arrow.

Laert. My lord, at twenty yards I've killed a sparrow.

King. Enough! he's pretty good at all such games, And to excel all Danish youth he aims. I'll make an entertainment for the court, And ask both him and you to join the sport; And then I'll bet a dozen of good Sherry (Just for the sake of being gay and merry) He'll hit you oftener, shooting at you thrice, Than you will him. Now think of some device To fix his flint.

Laert. Consider him as dead.

I'll stick a pin in every arrow's head, And rub it with an unction that I bought Of an apothecary, who was short, Or he would not have sold it; — if I hit him He'll die as quick as if an asp had bit him.

King. Of such a way 't was bright in you to think; Laertes, you're a trump! — let's take a drink!

[*They go to the sideboard and pour out something from a decanter, into two glasses.*]

I look towards you.

Laert. King, I have your eye.

King. You do me proud. — [*They drink.*]

Laert. Your Highness, wa'n't I dry?

Sir, you must know, since I left Elsinore
I've tasted nothing like that.

King. Take some more.

Laert. Excuse me, sire, but I've not yet dined.

King. Well, come and get some, just when you've a mind;

And if the sideboard should be locked, the key
Will be hung there. [*Points to a hook on the wall.*]

Laert. Thank you, my lord, I see.

King. I feel much better since this small arrangement
We've made; there must be no estrangement
Between us, for the future. Come and dine
With me to-day; — we'll drink the old king's wine,
And eat a leg of real South Down mutton.
Do you like the programme?

Laert. I don't care a button
What is to be your royal highness' fare, —
The honor is the thing. — I will be there!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Church Yard.

Enter two GRAVE-DIGGERS, with spades, &c., &c.

1st G. D. People may sneer and laugh at us, my friend,

But then we triumph o'er them in the end.
To me it's quite a treat to dig a grave
For one who's flouted me and called me knave.

2d G. D. But on this subject you've quite often spoke,

So, stop your mouth, unless you've got a joke,
Or a conundrum for me.

1st G. D. By the way,
That just reminds me that the other day,
While I was looking o'er the "Boston Post,"
(Which always has of clever things a host,)
To ascertain the deaths, and news congressional,
I found a query that was quite professional.
It was, When is a tombstone like a rushlight?

2d G. D. [scratching his head.]
I could not guess, if I should try all night, —

And so at once I think I'll give it up.

1st G. D. When for a late husband 't is set up !

2d G. D. That's very good ; but now we must begin.

1st G. D. Go fetch a stoup of liquor from the inn.

[*Exit 2d G. D.*

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1st G. D. [*Digs and Sings.*]

AIR — *The Song of the Shirt.*

With fingers weary and cold,

With eyelids heavy and red,

Among the graves and tombstones here

I'm digging a narrow bed.

Dig ! Dig ! Dig !

In sand and gravel and dirt,

And still I sing the grave-digger's song,

To the tune of the "Song of the Shirt."

Ham. 'T is strange this man while digging graves
can sing !

Hor. Custom soon reconciles to any thing.

1st G. D. [*Digs and Sings.*]

Dig ! Dig ! Dig !

While the cock is crowing aloof,

Exposed to the wind and the rain,

Without the sign of a roof,

It's hard to be a slave

Along with a barbarous Turk, —

With a body to toil, but no soul to save ;

But this is harder work. [*Throws up a skull.*

Ham. Perchance that was the skull of some young
girl

Much envied, courted, and caressed by all ;

Who flirted, visited, and read romances,
Played, sang, spoke French, and knew the latest dances.
And now, if so, how wonderful the change!

Hor. It is as sad, my lord, as it is strange.

1st G. D. [Digs and sings.]

Dig! Dig! Dig!
Till the brain begins to swim,
And Dig! Dig! Dig!
Till my eyes get heavy and dim;
Spade and pickaxe and shovel,
Shovel and pickaxe and spade,
I use first one and then the other,
Until the grave is made.

[Throws up a skull.]

Ham. And this may have belonged to an attorney!

Hor. He's gone now on a long and fearful journey!

Ham. Perhaps he left upon his office door:
"Return on Wednesday;" — he'll return no more.
No longer at poor debtors can he rail,
Or attach property, or hold to bail.
No longer can he deed or mortgage draw,
Or chaff a jury, or raise points of law.

[HAMLET looks at the skull attentively.]

Something persuades me I this fellow knew,
And if I'm right, I trust he's got his due.

[To grave digger.]

Sirrah! whose grave is this?

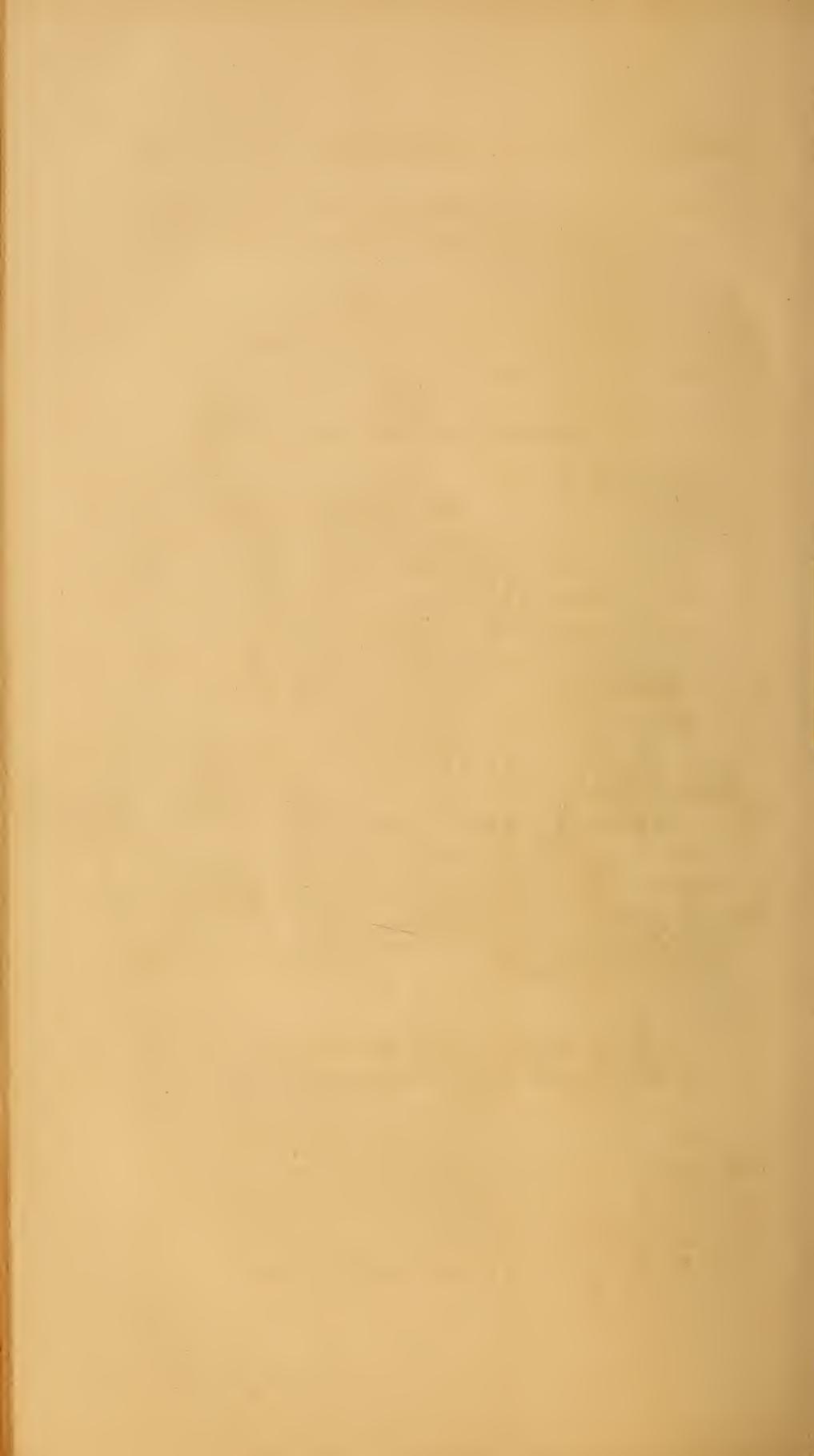
1st G. D. Mine, just at present.

Ham. The rascal's really trying to be pleasant!
We must speak by the card, Horatio.
For what man is it, tell me, if you know.

1st G. D. For no man, sir.



HAMLET MORALIZING TO HORATIO.



Ham. Well, for what woman, then?

1st G. D. For none—but one who was worth many men,

And was a woman always during life,

And should have been the young Lord Hamlet's wife.

Ham. Can you inform me, knave, what caused her death?

1st G. D. I've a suspicion it was want of breath.

Ham. It often happens.

1st G. D. Sir, it may seem funny,
But more deaths have been caused by want of money.
If you should wish for something in my line,
Give me a call—the best concern is mine;
To avoid mistake, you'd better take my card,—

[*Gives card.*]

“*John Micklebottom*,—(that word's pretty hard!)

Sexton and Undertaker, up the yard,”

Close by the palace,—you'll be sure to find it,—

A coffin's o'er the door, but you wo'n't mind it;

On being satisfied, you may depend

I'd like to bury both yourself and friend.

Hor. No doubt you'd find the occupation pleasant,
But we are otherwise engaged, at present.

1st G. D. [*Gives one of the skulls a hit with his spade.*]

In former times that same skull did belong

To one quite noted for his wit and song;

I think they called him Yorick.

Ham. Knave, do tell!—
The jester of the court—I knew him well.
Where now are all his jokes, both old and new,
His gibes and gambols?

1st G. D. I do n't know; do you?

Ham. Here's what is left of that sagacious fool !
And though no marble monument —

Hor. It's cool ;
Therefore towards the palace let's be walking.

Ham. Do n't interrupt a fellow when he's talking !

Hor. Some other time I'll come and hear the end
Of your discourse, my moralizing friend.

Ham. I had some very clever things to say,
But if you will not listen, — let's away.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Hor. 'Tis comfortable here ; and now, my friend,
If you'll tell your adventures, I'll attend.

Ham. Well. The first night at sea I could not sleep,
And so I went on deck to take a peep
At all the stars, and smoke a mild cigar,
To soothe my nerves and dissipate all care.
While there I thought of something that I saw
That Guildenstern deposit in a drawer
Of the locker in his state-room, — so I went
Down, on the larceny of it fully bent.
'T was a despatch to our Chargé directed,
And, though I feared lest I might be detected,
I oped and read it by the swinging light
Hung in the cabin. Horatio, that same night
Was sealed the fate of those two treacherous men ; —
They ne'er will come to trouble me again !
These papers, sealed up with the royal seal,
A deep-laid plot against me did reveal.

There were certificates that I was mad,
And that my turns were wonderfully bad;
Then came a letter to a great physician,
Who kept an asylum, stating my condition,—
And telling him the instant he had read
The document, to take and shave my head,
Put a strait jacket on, and with a chain
Secure me in a cell,— and ne'er again
To let me out.

Hor. Why, bless me ! my dear lord,
This was most villainous ! upon my word.

Ham. I've the original papers now about me,
That you can see, Horatio, if you doubt me.

Hor. I do n't, my lord, but beg that you 'll go on,
And tell me how this desperate game you won.

Ham. I sat me down and took a pen and ink,
And wrote a letter to our Charge ; — think
How I delighted in the task ! I said,
As soon as this had been received and read,
He was to take the bearers and transport
Them to some ship about to leave the port,—
And all their protestations not to mind,
As they were villains of the rankest kind ;
But take and put them forcibly on board,
And tell the captain he must work them hard ;
And also, every morning, noon, and night
Must have them tied up to the rigging tight,
And flogged about as much as they can bear ;
And should he find some island rough and drear,
He might set them ashore. I put this note
Into the envelope, whereon was wrote
The name of our Charge d'Affaires at London.

Hor. But if you 'd broke it open, it was undone ;
What means had you the great seal to repair ?

Ham. There was a special Providence seen there,—
I had my father's old watch in my fob,—
His seal was on the chain — that did the job.

Hor. 'T was very fortunate. Those wretched men
Wo' n't feel like plotting 'gainst a prince again!

Ham. My letter told you what has since occurred.

Hor. It is the strangest tale that e'er I heard.

Ham. Horatio, there is much yet left to do;
In every thing I shall depend on you.

Enter OSRIC.

Osric. Your lordship is quite welcome home again.

Ham. If that's all you've to say, pray don't remain.

Osric. If you're inclined to hear me, sir, I bring
A message to you from our gracious king.

Ham. The king be — Well, sir, if you can be short,
I'll hear what news you bring me from the court.

Osric. I will be brief. Our most majestic sire
Has sent me here to say 'tis his desire
To have you shoot a match, — he'd like to know
If you can beat Laertes with a bow;
He thinks you can, and so he's made a wager.

Ham. At gambling he's a regular old stager!
It matters little to me what I do, —
I'll shoot Laertes, or the king, or you!
If it will be a pleasure to the court,
And if they'll be on hand to see the sport.

Osric. They will be here, your highness, in a minute.

Ham. If I do n't hit him there, [gives HORATIO a
practical illustration of the place where he intends
to hit LAERTES, by giving him a poke in what is
technically termed "the wind,"] the deuce is in it!

*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, LORDS, OSRIC,
and Attendants.*

King. Now, gentlemen, this promises some fun.
I wish to say, that when the sport is done,
We shall expect the presence of you all
To a grand banquet and a splendid ball ;
And now I think, before the trumpets sound,
We'd better have a drink or so all 'round.

[They shout.

Servants bring in decanters and glasses ; all rush to the table and pour out, and call vociferously upon OSRIC for a sentiment.

Osric. Here's the king's health ! — May he live and reign long !
And now I call upon him for a song.

[They all call out "king's song."]

King. Well, I a' n't what you term a singing man,
But since I'm called, I'll do the best I can.

SONG.

AIR — *Sing, sing, music was given.*

Drink ! Drink ! liquor was given
To enliven the dull and kindle the loving ;
Some souls that are wanting in leaven
By "something to take" alone are kept moving.
Beauty may boast of her lips and her eyes,
And all her attractions that men so enthrall,
But when from my bosom come nothing but sighs,
I think that good liquor surpasses them all.

Then drink, drink, &c.

When Cupid, nursed by his mother,
 Was lying as ill as measles could make him,
 The doctor may go,— said his father,— no other
 One but myself in hand now shall take him.
 Then he mixed him some whiskey and water,— the while
 Fair Venus stood by, not enjoying the joke,
 But she the next morning looked on with a smile,
 When merry and well little Cupid awoke !

Then drink, drink, &c.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

King. The trumpets sound ; so let the sport begin.

[*To Hamlet.*

We've bet on you, and trust that you will win.

Ham. [*To Laertes.*] If I've offended you in any way,

I'm here to be forgiven, and must say
 That family affairs have so distressed me,
 And pains of indigestion so oppressed me,
 For quite a time, in fact for all last season,
 That I've been quite disordered in my reason ;
 I was not Hamlet, but some other one,—
 That, sir, is my excuse for all I've done.

Laertes. Thanks, noble prince, for this extreme
 urbanity,—

That little intermission of your sanity
 Cost me a father and an only sister.
 The dear Ophelia ! sadly have I missed her.
 Her death must be avenged, and if you please,
 Some time we'll cross our swords, my mind to ease.
 As for the governor, he was old and cross,
 And what he's left consoles me for his loss.

Ham. Your sister's funeral takes place to-morrow ;
After the ceremonies, if you'll borrow
A moment from your time, we'll soon cry quits
On that score. Now for the odd hits.

Laertes. Come, bring the weapons ; I will win the wine
As soon as may be,— for at half-past nine
I have an engagement.

[Attendant gives LAERTES a bow.

Ham.

Come, give me mine.

[Attendant gives HAMLET a bow.

Laertes, is this bow as good as thine ?
In these arrangements I have had no voice.

Laertes. They're both alike, but you may take your choice.

[To Attendants.

Come, bring your arrows, if you want them shot.

[Attendant brings six arrows, three of which he delivers to HAMLET, and the remaining three to LAERTES.]

Ham. I'll hit you in a twinkling, now.

Laertes. Guess not !

[HAMLET and LAERTES take their places about ten feet apart, and each shoots an arrow at the other, but the attempts to hit are ineffectual.]

Ham. [To King.] I did not hit him, but came very near him.

King. Nears do n't count. Laertes, never fear him ; His hand's unsteady.

Laertes. I will hit him, now.

[HAMLET and LAERTES shoot at each other again, and the result is the same as on the former occasion.]

There must be something wrong about the bow.

[They prepare to shoot again.

Ham. For that expressive nose of yours, look out !

Laertes. I'll blacken your left eye, without a doubt.

[*They shoot again, — the same result.*

Ham. We've shot three times apiece, let's make it four ;

Come on, Laertes, let us try once more, —

You'll find an arrow there upon the floor.

[*HAMLET picks up one of the arrows that LAERTES has shot at him, and fits it to his bow; at which LAERTES seems much agitated.*]

Laertes. [*Aside.*] He's got one of my arrows ! — And if now

He hits me, I am done for, any how.

[*They shoot again, and HAMLET hits LAERTES, who pulls out the arrow, fits it to his bow, and as HAMLET is turning to appeal to the KING, shoots at him, and hits him. — LAERTES then falls.*]

Laertes. Oh ! Hamlet ! Hamlet ! I am served quite right !

But neither of us can live through the night.

Each arrow that I shot at you had in

The head, quite firmly fixed, a poisoned pin.

'Twas one of those with which you just now hit me,

And I hit you, — and if a snake had bit me,

I could not feel much worse. — I'm dead.

[*HAMLET, on receiving this information, falls.*

Ham. The same !

Laertes. My last words are, that wicked king's to blame.

1st Lord. Down with the king !

2d Lord. Pitch into him !

3d Lord. Dethrone him !

4th Lord. Punch his head !

5th Lord. Hit him !

6th Lord. Turn him out!

7th Lord. And stone him!

King. I knew 't would come! I see what you're all at.
If I can't reign, I'll mizzle.—Where's my hat?

[They find his hat for him, crowd it on over his eyes, and hustle him in the style in which General Haynau was hustled, at Barclay & Perkins' Brewery, and then hand him over to a couple of policemen, who take him off. The QUEEN, meanwhile, leaves by the back door, "en route" for the Magdalen Asylum.]

Osric. There's been a small mistake here; I'll explain:—

These two right valiant nobles are not slain.

I overheard the most infernal plot
To kill the prince, and swore that they should not.
I had a key made for Laertes' locks,
And searched his bureau till I found the box
That held the poisoned ointment—forced the lid,
Emptied, and put in Russia Salve instead!

[HAMLET and LAERTES, who are lying upon the floor, apparently in great agony, spring to their feet and embrace OSRIC.]

Laert. [To Osric.] Then we a'n't dead!—I really did not know

That from your mouth such pleasant words could flow.

Ham. Faith, this is pleasant! Osric, there's my hand.

1st Lord. Lord Hamlet shall be king o'er all the land! [All shout.]

Ham. [To Horatio.] And you shall be Prime Minister, my boy.

[To Laertes.] Were but your gentle sister here, our joy

Would be complete.

Enter OPHELIA.

Is that a phantom there?

Oph. I thought I'd come to see how you all were.

Ham. What! a' n't you dead?

Oph. I only made believe,

With chloroform.

Laert. Why did you so deceive?

Oph. I thought it might bring Hamlet to his senses.

Ham. You rogue! you've made me well by false pretences! —

But now I'm king, and all things shall go right,
We'll have a banquet and a dance to-night.
And if I still am lord of your affection,
Sometime to-morrow, if there's no objection,
We'll have the greatest wedding that's been seen
In Denmark's land.

Oph. [Aside.] So I'm to be a queen!

[Aloud.] Sir, as this is a time of great hilarity,
I will accept your hand — but out of charity.

Ham. I care not, so you'll take it; and my life
Shall be devoted to my charming wife.

SONG.

AIR — *Oh, Susannah.*

Oph. I had a most delightful dream — I think 't was
Thursday night,
I dreamed, in spite of all my grief, that things would
turn out right;
That Hamlet would come back, restored from good old
England's strand,
And I should be his queen, and rule with him through-
out the land.

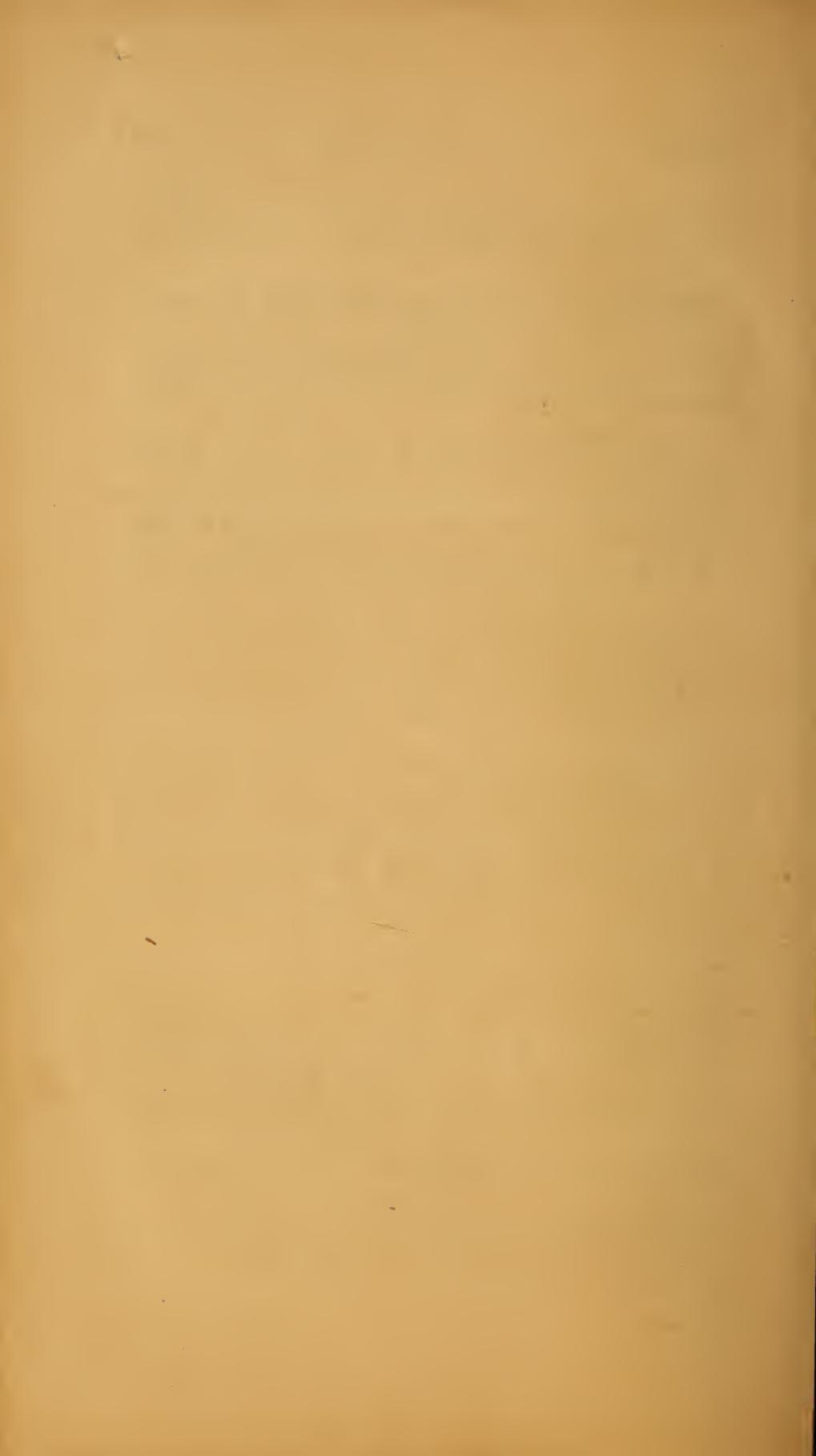
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(*Chorus.*) So, dear ladies, do n't you weep for me,
I'm very happy now, and soon I'll be a queen, you see.

Ham. That her sweet dream has come to pass, is
really quite delightful,
For at one time the aspect of affairs was truly frightful.
But still I thought that soon or late as matters are they
would be,
And Virtue'd be victorious, as Virtue always should
be.

(*Chorus.*) So, dear public, do n't you grieve for me,
I'm king, and dear Ophelia's to be my queen, you see !

THE END.



1965

AN

OLD PLAY

IN

A NEW GARB;

(Hamlet, Prince of Denmark;)

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

GEO. EDWARD RICE.

"Dulce est desipere in loco."

HORACE.

"Not to speak it profanely."

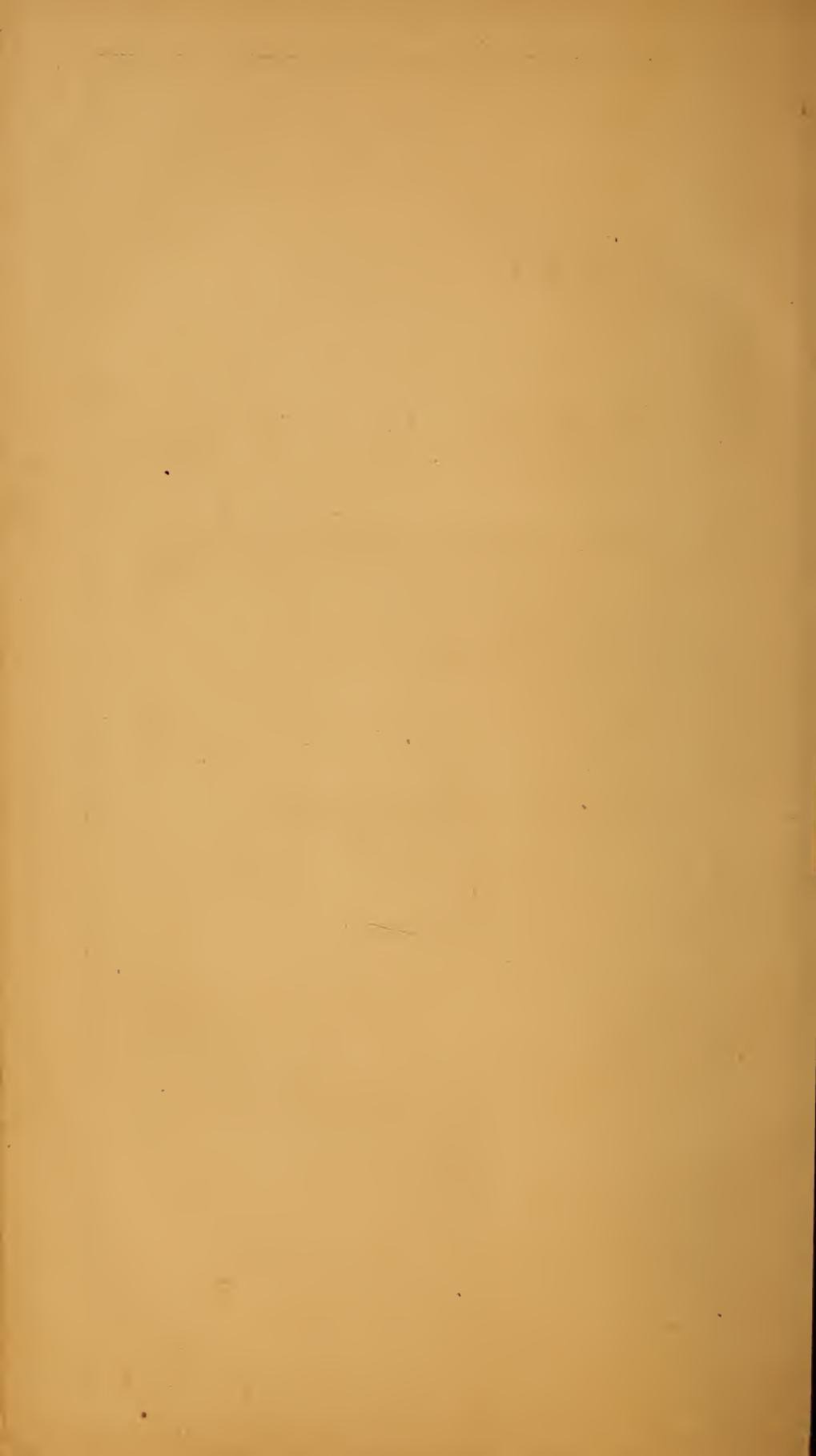
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THIRD EDITION.

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NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

AN OLD PLAY IN A NEW GARB—*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.*

Boston : Ticknor, Reed, and Fields. 12mo., pp. 59.

"TICKNOR has just published a nice pamphlet, which is highly creditable to the parties concerned. It is a new Hamlet Travestie, with several unique illustrations. Both the writer of the text and the designer of the illustrations are among our most esteemed contributors. The whole affair is very cleverly got up. The verse is easy and elegant, with numerous pleasant hits, while the engravings are fully equal, in point of fun, humor, and execution, to those of the best English artists. The departure of L. Polonius for France, the appearance of the buried majesty of Denmark in his accustomed dress, and the reading of Hamlet's letter to Horatio, cannot be surpassed."—*Boston Post.*

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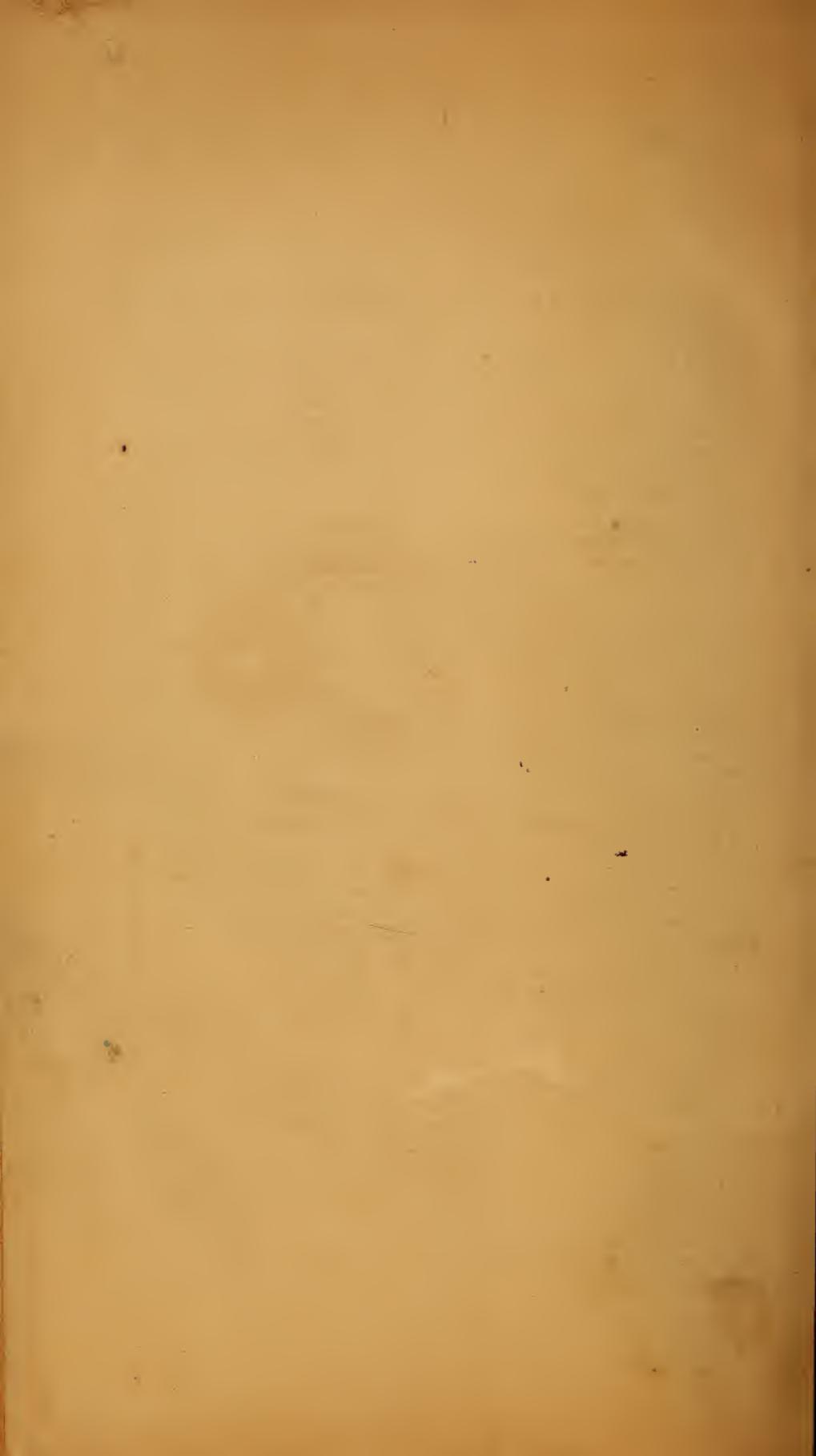
There are five illustrations on wood accompanying the text, which are designed with so much cleverness and spirit, that we supposed the publishers must have got them from Cruikshank, or H. K. Browne. We learn, however, that they were drawn by a native amateur. They show very remarkable and available talent, and are among the best things of the kind that we have ever seen."—*Transcript.*

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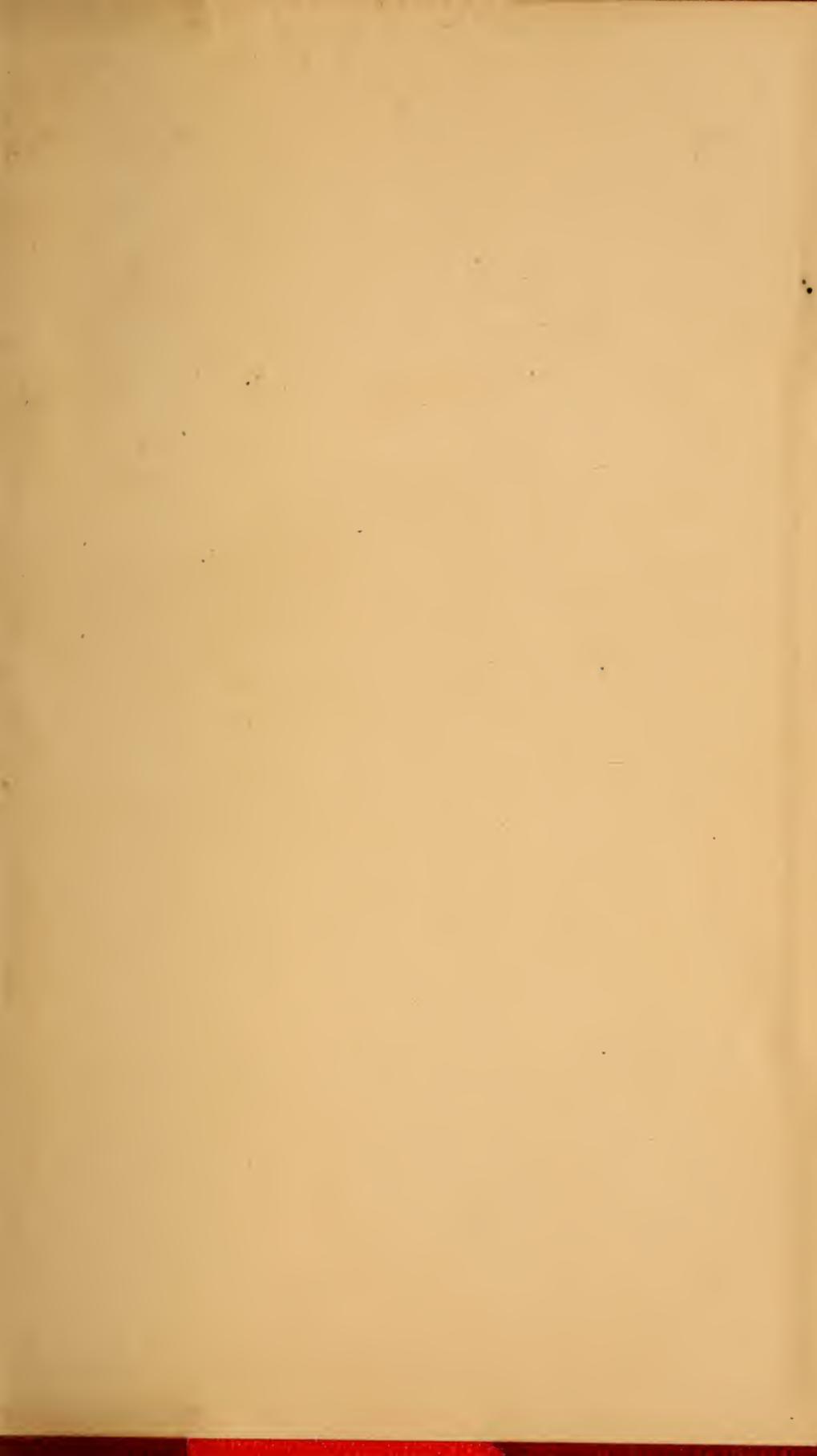
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